

Case 2654

**Rapport sur les Myodaires du Docteur Robineau Desvoidy, (1826):
proposed nomenclatural suppression**

Curtis W. Sabrosky

*Systematic Entomology Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, USDA,
c/o U.S. National Museum, Washington, DC 20560, U.S.A.*

Abstract. The purpose of this application is the maintenance of stability in the nomenclature of Muscoid (higher) flies by the suppression of a report to the Académie Royale des Sciences (Paris) on the manuscript of J. B. Robineau-Desvoidy's 1830 *Essai sur les Myodaires*. At present the availability of names in the 1826 *Rapport* is uncertain.

1. It is desirable to clarify the nomenclatural status of the work entitled *Rapport sur les Myodaires du Docteur Robineau Desvoidy** (1826), which was written by a commission of the Académie Royale des Sciences consisting of Latreille, Duméril, and de Blainville (Rapporteur). The *Rapport* was read in the meeting of the Académie of 2 October 1826, as stated in the small printed version of 24 pages. It has been referred to only rarely in the published literature, and questions have arisen as to whether it was published in the meaning of the Code. The *Rapport* is printed, but at that period printing was the means of making numerous copies. On the face of it, this is an 'in-house' report for the members of the Académie on the suitability of the manuscript of Robineau-Desvoidy's *Essai sur les Myodaires* (1830) for publication by the Académie, and was not intended as a separate publication for permanent scientific record. Indeed, it contains suggestions for changes that should be made. To remove the uncertainty and to avoid confusion and serious problems, I propose that the Commission place it on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Works in Zoological Nomenclature.

2. Robineau-Desvoidy's great work *Essai sur les Myodaires* was published in 1830 by the Académie Royale des Sciences. The manuscript was submitted to the Académie at its meeting of 28 August 1826, and the commission referred to was charged with examining it and rendering judgment on it. The *Rapport* is their report, in some detail. In reviewing the manuscript they discussed by name, both vernacular and scientific, the various families and tribes, mentioning some included genera and species and noting types in a few instances, and these items give rise to some nomenclatural problems. The commission also made suggestions, such as changing some of the names, and obviously some revisions were made before the publication of the book in 1830. Some of the names of 1826 do not appear again, and the author considerably reduced the number of tribes recognized. The commission closed the *Rapport* by recommending that the work be published 'dans le recueil des Savans étrangers' and further proposed to the Académie 'd'en faciliter et d'en accélérer la publication par tous les moyens qui sont à votre disposition.'

*In the *Rapport* Robineau-Desvoidy is written without a hyphen.

3. The numerous and important generic names proposed by Robineau-Desvoidy in his *Essai* have always been credited to the 1830 work. The names are so cited in the generic nomenclators of Agassiz, Scudder, Schulze, and in the *Index Animalium* of Sherborn, and the 1826 work is not mentioned. I know of no family or generic name or type designation credited to it, and its recognition now, over a century and a half later, would involve some difficult or potentially serious problems. The following paragraphs analyse the names and what would be involved if the *Rapport* were to be considered published in the meaning of the Code.

4. *Authorship and date.* If dated from 1826, the names might arguably be credited to de Blainville, or with the awkward citations de Blainville, Duméril and Latreille, or Robineau-Desvoidy in de Blainville et al. If the *Rapport* were suppressed, authorship and date would remain Robineau-Desvoidy, 1830, which agrees with universal usage.

5. *Family-group names.* These might date from the 1826 work, because for that time they required only formation from 'the name then valid for a contained genus' (Code, Article 11f). In what he called the 'ordre' Myodariae, Robineau-Desvoidy (1826, as quoted in the *Rapport*) included 10 families and 41 tribes, with both vernacular and latinized spelling given.

- (a) Thirty-five of the 51 family-group names are not based on generic names and thus have no standing whatever in nomenclature. They are often descriptive terms plus a group ending, e.g. Aciphoreae for those with horny pointed ovipositors. Most of these names were also used in the 1830 work.
- (b) Eleven family-group names are based on generic names, judging from included species that can be associated with generic names by comparison with the 1830 work. However, the 11 generic names are not mentioned in the 1826 work and were not established until the 1830 *Essai*. Thus these group names have no nomenclatural standing as of 1826. For the record, these are Aricinae, Macromyidae, Pherbelliinae, Limosellae, Hylemyidae, Pegomyidae, Terhenidae, Napeellae, Myodinae, Theliodomyae, and Hydrellidae.
- (c) Two family-group names are based on older generic names and hence would have standing from 1826, but they are antedated by earlier versions of the same names and thus cause no problem. Muscidae is antedated by Muscides Latreille, 1802, and Phytomyidae by Phytomyzides Fallén, 1823.
- (d) One family-group name, Scatophaginae, was obviously (from a cited species) based on *Scatophaga* Meigen, 1803 (actually *Scathophaga*; the error or emendation *Scatophaga* by Fabricius (1805) has been commonly used). The generic name was not mentioned in 1826 but the group name could be dated from the 1826 work rather than from 1830 because of the 'inference in context' to *Scatophaga* (Code, Article 11f(i)1).
- (e) Finally, for two family-group names the type genus is mentioned, and these names would date from the 1826 *Rapport* if it were considered published; if not they will date from Robineau-Desvoidy (1830) as customarily credited. Both could cause upsets in established usage:

Ocypteratae: Robineau-Desvoidy noted that his group corresponded to *Ocyptera* of Fabricius, but the genus was actually published by Latreille in 1804. In both Latreille and Fabricius it was a mixture of two quite different groups now placed in TACHINIDAE Robineau-Desvoidy, 1830, and later type designation restricted the name to a genus now known as *Eriothrix* Meigen,

1803, with *Ocyptera* in synonymy, in a tribe ERIOTHRIXINI which dates from the 20th century. If the 1826 work were considered published, Ocypteratae (as OCYPTERIDIDAE) would antedate not only ERIOTHRIXINI (although the latter could be valid under Article 40b) but also TACHINIDAE itself.

Phasianae: The genus *Phasia* dates from Latreille (1804), although Robineau-Desvoidy said his group was based on *Phasia* of Fabricius, adopted by Meigen. In any event, the same genus is involved. The 1826 work has the oldest name for the group, which has been variously called tribe, subfamily, or family; it is currently a subfamily of TACHINIDAE. If dated from 1826, PHASIIDAE would have priority over the important family name TACHINIDAE Robineau-Desvoidy, 1830, for the parasitic higher Diptera. In the *Essai*, the spelling was Phasianae, only slightly different from 1826.

6. *Generic names* are used only sparingly in the *Rapport*, and many of those are older names such as *Echinomya*, *Musca*, *Ocyptera*, and *Tachina*. Some hitherto unpublished names are mentioned but without description or included species; these are nomina nuda and need not concern us further. In a few cases, however, older species are associated with the generic name, either as designated type species or the only included species, and such association would either make the generic name available or cause possible trouble from the type designation, if the 1826 work were considered published. These are as follows:

- (a) *Tachina* (p. 11): 'G. *Tachina* de Fabricius, ayant le *Musca rotundata* pour type'. This is no problem. *Tachina* dates from Meigen, 1803, and *rotundata* was not one of the three originally included nominal species.
- (b) *Myophore* (p. 11) was associated with three older nominal species, and also with a description, which might have been that of the tribe Theramydae. *Myophore* may have been intended as a vernacular, even though italicized. The genus appeared as *Myophora* in the 1830 work, perhaps a correction recommended by the commission, and recognition of the 1826 work would require a slight but annoying change in the spelling. It is currently a synonym of *Sarcophaga* Meigen, 1826, and there would be a question of priority between Meigen (1826) and Robineau-Desvoidy (1826), which conceivably might threaten the long-used and important name *Sarcophaga*. The date of the preface in Meigen, which is two months earlier than the meeting of the Académie, suggests that Meigen's work could have appeared earlier, but that is not certain.
- (c) *Stygia* (p. 11) is based on the Linnaean species *Musca meridiana*. There is no problem here. *Stygia* is preoccupied (in Lepidoptera, by *Stygia* Latreille, 1803), and Meigen in 1826 had proposed the well-known name *Mesembrina* to include the same species. Apparently Robineau-Desvoidy recognised or was told of the homonymy; at least in the 1830 *Essai* he adopted Meigen's generic name *Mesembrina*. *Stygia* does not appear again.
- (d) *Pollenia* (p. 11): 'Le *Musca alteralibis* est le type de son G. *Pollenia*.' In 1830, Robineau-Desvoidy designated *Musca rudis* Fabricius as type species of *Pollenia*, and this has long been recognised. The name *Musca alteralibis* has not been found anywhere else, and it does not appear in the 1830 *Essai*. It might have been a lapsus for *Musca alterabilis* Gmelin, 1790. Except for a listing of the latter in Sherborn's *Index Animalium*, and a mention of it in

1802, neither name has been found in the literature. If the 1826 work were accepted as published, the status of *Pollenia* might be a serious problem. If *alteralibis* were considered a manuscript name of Robineau-Desvoidy, then it and *Pollenia* are nomina nuda in 1826, and there would be no threat. But, if *alteralibis* were considered merely a lapsus for *alterabilis* Gmelin, which is possible, even probable, then *Pollenia* would be an available name in 1826 but based on a nomen dubium. Suppression of the 1826 paper would remove all doubts and uncertainties, thus dating *Pollenia* from the 1830 work in conformity with universal and long-standing usage. The name *Pollenia* is widely recognised for the common cluster flies and as the basis for tribal and subfamily names in the blow fly family CALLIPHORIDAE.

- (e) *Calliphora* (p. 11): 'Le *Musca vomitoria* constitue le G. *Calliphora*.' Recognition of the 1826 paper would give availability to *Calliphora* as of that date, by indication, with type species by monotypy. This would cause no problem, because in the *Essai* Robineau-Desvoidy designated *M. vomitoria* as type species.
- (f) *Chrysomya* (p. 11): "Dans celui qu'il nomme *Chrysomya* se trouvent la brillante Mouche César." In 1830 Robineau-Desvoidy proposed *Chrysomya* and *Lucilia* as neighboring genera, with *Musca caesar* Linnaeus as type species of *Lucilia*, and these widespread and important genera have been so recognised ever since. If the *Rapport* were construed as associating *caesar* with *Chrysomya*, then *Chrysomya* would have availability from 1826 and this would seriously confuse the genera in CALLIPHORIDAE. *Chrysomya* was neither described nor diagnosed in 1826, but before 1931 a generic name might have been made available by indication. Fortunately, the Code requires for indication by inclusion of species that 'one or more available species-group names' must be included (Code, Article 12b(5)), and Article 12c specifically excludes vernacular names. A question might still be raised whether 'la brillante' is acceptable—however marginally—as descriptive matter, or even whether the vernacular reference to an existing specific name could be construed as a reference to an existing description. Marginal and suspect as these considerations admittedly are, any uncertainty would be removed by suppression of the *Rapport*.
- (g) *Biomye* (p. 11) was said to contain a fly that annoyed large quadrupeds and that Robineau-Desvoidy named *B. stimulans*. The generic name, although italicised, might have been intended as a vernacular, but like *Myophore* one cannot be sure. It was published as *Biomya* in 1830. There is no problem, however, because *B. stimulans* was not described until 1830, and both *Biomya* and *stimulans* are nomina nuda in 1826. On the face of it, Robineau-Desvoidy does not appear to be referring to *Stomoxys stimulans* Meigen, 1824, as he does not cite this species, either in 1826 or 1830.

7. Three generic names appear to be associated with descriptive matter in the 1826 *Rapport*, and thus they would be available names, even though no nominal species are mentioned with them.

- (a) *Voidia* (p. 10: '... les espèces du G. *Voidia* paraissent propres à Paris.') Then the following sentence contains a description of the antennae, calypteres, and body. This description appears from its position to be a description of *Voidia*, although comparison with other entries suggests that it is actually a descript-

ion of the tribe Lepidomyidae. This generic name was not used in the 1830 work, but laborious comparison might show what name was adopted there, and what name might be upset if the 1826 work were considered published.

- (b) *Phorophylla* (p. 10). There is a brief descriptive statement associated with the name: 'que M. Desvoidy a admis deux paires de palpes inférieurs.' This is brief but sufficient, weak as it is, to make the name available if the work were considered published. *Phorophylla* would thus antedate the 1830 publication of the name and would have priority over the currently used name *Phyllomya* Robineau-Desvoidy, 1830, for a genus of TACHINIDAE.
- (c) *Elaimya* (p. 17): The genus itself is not described but it is the only generic name mentioned with the description of the tribe: 'Les Myodines [MYODINAE] ne diffèrent de la tribu précédente, que par la plus grande longueur du troisième article antennaire, et par la soie ordinairement nue. C'est décidément cette tribu qui comprend la mouche d'olivier [the olive fruit fly, *Dacus oleae* (Gmelin)], dont M. Robineau fait le G. *Elaimya*.' The citation of a vernacular species name does not confer availability on the generic name *Elaimya* but association with descriptive material can do so. *Elaimya* was not mentioned in the 1830 *Essai*.

8. There are enough problems and uncertainties in connection with the 1826 *Rapport*, involving some very important genera in the calyptate Diptera, that the simplest and most direct solution is to suppress it or to declare it a work unpublished in the meaning of the Code. Otherwise, individual applications would have to be prepared on various genera. Robineau-Desvoidy's reputation rests justly on his great work of 1830 and should not be affected and confused by the 'in-house' report of a publications committee.

9. Although I believe that the *Rapport* could reasonably be interpreted as unpublished in the meaning of the Code (Article 8a), its formal suppression for nomenclatural purposes would be better if there exists any uncertainty or difference of opinion about the availability of the names published in it.

10. This application is supported by R. W. Crosskey, Neal L. Evenhuis, Wayne N. Mathis, A. C. Pont and F. C. Thompson.

11. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress for nomenclatural purposes the following work:

Rapport sur les Myodaires du Docteur Robineau Desvoidy (H. M. D. de Blainville, Rapporteur), Académie Royale des Sciences de l'Institut de France, Paris, 1826.

- (2) to place the above work, as suppressed in (1), on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Works in Zoological Nomenclature.

References

- Académie Royale des Sciences de l'Institut de France. 1826. *Rapport sur les Myodaires du Docteur Robineau Desvoidy* (H. M. D. de Blainville, Rapporteur), 24 pp. Paris.
- Robineau-Desvoidy, J. B. 1830. *Essai sur les Myodaires. Mémoires présentés par divers savans à l'Académie Royale des Sciences de l'Institut de France, sér 2, vol. 2*, 813 pp. Imprimerie Royale, Paris.